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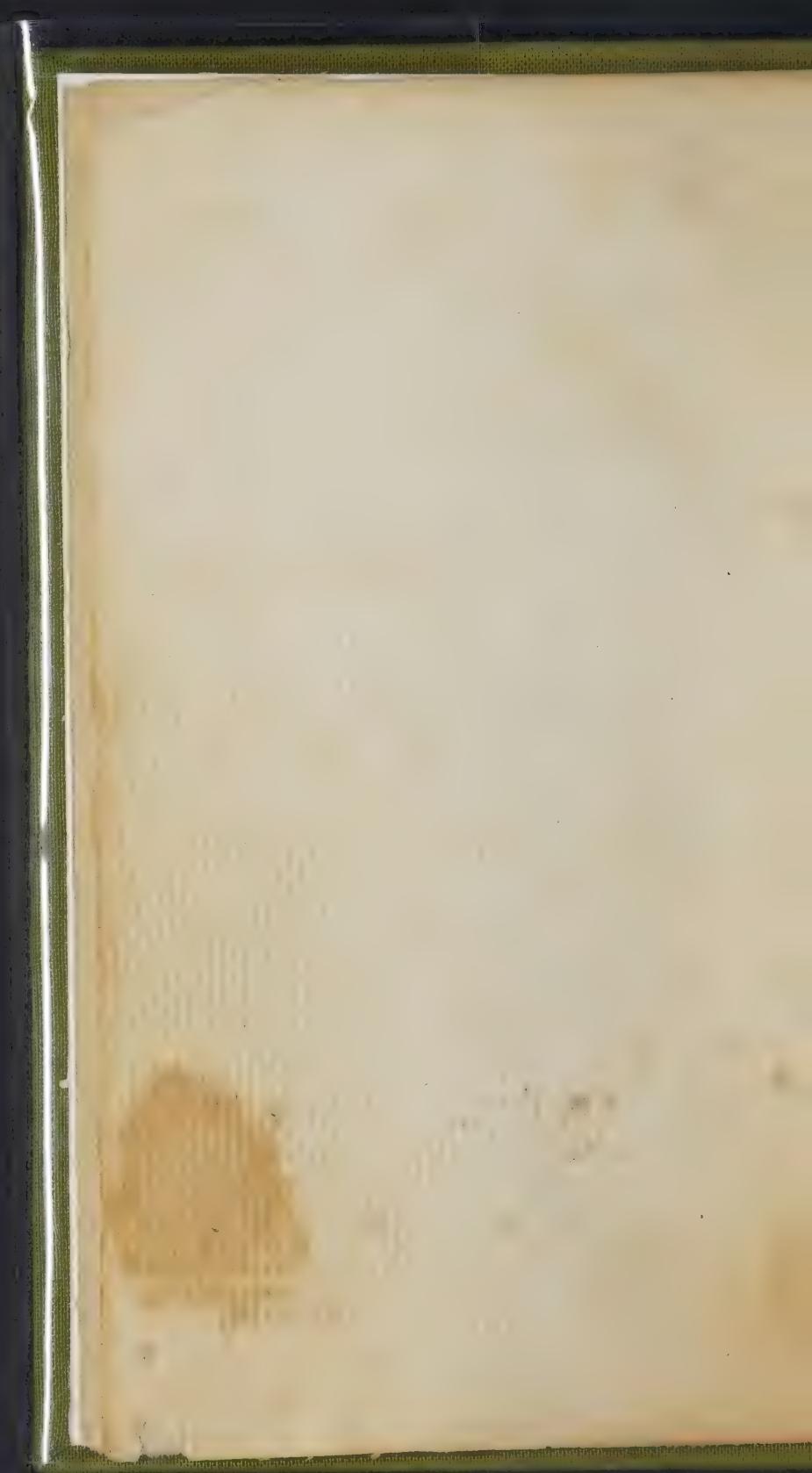
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1797.



THE
SHEPHERDESS OF THE ALPS.

A MORAL TALE.

IN the mountains of *Savoy*, near the road from *Briançon* to *Modane*, is a solitary valley, whose appearance inspires travellers with a sweet melancholy. Three hills in amphitheatre, where are spread at a great distance, some shepherds cottages; the torrents which fall from the mountains; the clusters of trees planted here and there, and the pastures, always green, make the ornament of this rural place.

The Marchioness de *Fonrose* was returning from *France* to *Italy* with her spouse. The axle-tree of their carriage was broken, and as the day was on the decline, they found it expedient to search in this valley an asylum where to pass the night. As they advanced towards one of the cottages which they had perceived, they saw a flock that took the road to it, conducted by a shepherdes, whose gait astonished them! They approached still nearer, and heard a celestial voice, whose feeling and plaintive accents caused the echoes to groan!

“ How the setting sun shines with a soft light! It is thus (says she) that at the end of a painful career, the exhausted

exhausted soul goes to become again young, in the pure source of immortality ! but, alas ! how far off is the term, and how is *life* lengthened?" On saying these words, the shepherdess moved on, with her head cast down! but the negligence of her attitude seemed to add still to her figure and gait, more of nobleness and majesty!

Struck with what they saw, and still more with what they had just heard, the Marquis and Marchioness de *Fonrose* doubled their pace to come up with this shepherdess, whom they admired. But what was their surprise, when under a hood the most simple, under the most humble garments, they saw all the graces, and

all the beauties united? My child, says the Marchioness, on seeing that she avoided them, fear nothing: we are travellers, and are obliged by accident to search in these cottages, a refuge, to wait for day-light; will you be so kind as to serve us for a guide?

I pity you, madam, says the shepherdess, casting down her eyes, and blushing: those cottages are inhabited by poor people, and you will therein be indifferently lodged. You doubtless lodge there yourself, replies the Marchioness; and I may well support one night those inconveniences, which you endure always. I was made for that, says the shepherdess, with a charming modesty. No, certainly,

certainly, says the Marquis de *Fonrose*, who could no longer dissemble the emotion which she had caused in him, no, you were not made to suffer, and fortune is very unjust! Is it possible, amiable person, that so many charms can be buried in this desert, under those habits?

Fortune, sir, replies *Adelaide* (for that was the name of the shepherdess) is not cruel, except when she takes from us what she has given. My state has its pleasures, which are unknown to others, and custom gives you necessities, that shepherds do not feel. That, perhaps, says the Marquis, is for those whom heaven caused to be born in this obscure condition; but you, astonishing

nishing girl, whom I admire, you that enchant me, you certainly were not born what you are; that air, gait, voice, even your language, all betray you. Two words, which you have just spoken, announce a cultivated mind, and a noble soul. Finish, inform us what accident has caused you to be reduced to this strange abasement.

For a man in misfortune, replies *Adelaide*, there are a thousand ways to get out; but for a woman, you know yourself, there is no decent resource but in servitude, and in the choice of masters, we do well, I think, to prefer good men. You shall go to see mine; you will be charmed with the innocence of *their* life,

life, of the candour, the simplicity, and civility of their manners.

As she talked thus, they arrived at the cottage. It was separated by a partition from the stable, where the *unknown* caused her sheep to enter, counting them with the most serious attention, and without deigning to busy herself more with the strangers, who were there contemplating.

An old man and his wife (such as they paint to us *Philemon and Baucis*) came out to their guests, with that civility of villagers that reminds us of the golden age. We have nothing to offer you, says the good woman, but of that fresh straw for a bed,
some

some milk, fruit, and some rye bread for food; but the little that heaven has given us, we will share with you willingly.

The travellers, on entering into the cottage, were surprised at the decent arrangement, that all in it presented. The table was of a single walnut plank, polished in the best manner: one might see himself in the enamel of the earthen vessels, that were destined to hold the milk. All presented the image of a cheerful poverty, and of the first needs of nature agreeably satisfied. It is our dear child, says the good woman, who takes care of the household affairs. In the morning before her flock has gone out into the country, and

and while they begin to feed about the house, on the grass covered with dew, she washes, cleanses, and arranges every thing, with an address that enchant us.

How! says the Marchioness, is that shepherdess your daughter? Ah, madam! would to heaven it was so, cries the good old woman. It is my heart that named her thus, for I have for her the love of a mother; but I am not so happy as to have carried her in my bosom. We are not worthy to have given her birth. Who is she then? where did she come from? and what misfortune has reduced her to the condition of a shepherdess? All that is to us unknown. It is four years since she came in the habit

bit of a peasant, and offered herself to guard our flock: we would have taken her for nothing, so good was her countenance, and the sweetnes of her conversation gained both our hearts. We doubted she was not a country maid, but our questions afflicted her, and we thought it our duty to abstain from them. This regard served but to augment the means by which we have better known her soul: for the more we wished to abase ourselves before her, the more she humbles herself before us. Never had a child from her father and mother, more supporting attention, nor more tender cares. She cannot obey us, for we take care not to command her; and it seemed as though she guessed our thoughts; for all that

we

we can wish, is done before we perceive she has thought of it. She is an angel descended among us, to comfort our old age. And what is she now doing in the stable? said the Marchioness. She is giving the flock fresh litter, and milking the sheep and goats. It seems as if the milk pressed by her hand, becomes more delicate; I, who go to sell it at the village, am unable to satisfy the sale, they find it so delicious. That dear child occupies herself while guarding her flock, in works of straw and willow, that all the world admires. I wish you could see with what address she entwines the flexible twigs. Every thing becomes precious under her fingers. You see Madam, continued the good old wo-

man, the image of an easy and tranquil life; it is she who procures it for us. This heavenly girl is only occupied to render us happy.

Is she then happy herself? asked the Marquis de *Fonrose*. She endeavours to persuade us so, replies the old man; but I have often observed to my wife, that on coming home from the pasture, she had her eyes moistened with tears, and the most afflicted air in the world. As soon as she could see us, she would attempt to smile, but we plainly see she has some pain that consumes her, and dare not ask it of her.

Ah Madam, says the old woman, what pity has this child caused me, when

when she would obstinately drive her flock to the pasture, in spite of the rain and frost. An hundred times have I put myself on my knees, begging that she would let me take her place; but my prayers were in vain. She would go there at the rising of the sun, and return in the evening chilled with cold. Judge, says she to me, if I shall let you go to quit your hearth, and let you expose yourself to the rigours of the season. Scarcely could I resist myself. Nevertheless, she brings under her arms the wood that warms us, and when I complain of the fatigue that she gives herself, let that alone, says she, my good mother, it is by exercise that I keep myself from the cold; work is made for my age. In short,

Madam, she is as good as she is handsome; and my husband and I, never speak of her but with tears in our eyes.

And what if one was to take her from you? asked the Marchioness. We would lose, interrupted the old man, all that we hold most dear in the world. But if she should be happy, we would die contented with that consolation. Alas! yes, replied the old woman, shedding tears, that heaven would grant to her a fortune of which she is worthy, if it is possible. My hope was, that her hands would close these eyes; but I love her more than my life. Her arrival interrupted them.

Adelaide

Adelaide appeared with a pail of milk in one hand, and a basket of fruit in the other; after saluting them with a grace that charmed, she directed her attention to the care of the family, as if nobody observed her. You give yourself a great deal of trouble, my dear child, said the Marchioness to her. I endeavour, Madam, replied she, to fulfil the intention of those I serve, who are willing to entertain you in the best manner they are able; you will have a frugal and rural repast, continued she, spreading over the table a coarse, but very white cloth; this bread is not the whitest in the world, but it tastes pretty well; the eggs are fresh, the milk is good, and the fruits, which I have just gathered, are such

as the season affords. The attention, the noble and becoming grace, with which this wonderful shepherdess paid them all the duties of hospitality, the respect she shewed for her master and mistress, filled the Marquis and Marchioness de *Fonrose* with astonishment and admiration. As soon as they were laid down upon the bed of fresh straw, which she had prepared for them herself, our adventure has the air of a prodigy, said they to each other, we must clear up this mystery; we must carry away this child along with us.

At break of day, one of the men, who had been up all night, mending their carriage, came to inform them that it was thoroughly repaired.

Madame

Madame de *Fonrose*, before she set out, ordered the shepherdes to be called to her. Without wanting to pry, said she to her, into the secret of your birth, and the cause of your misfortunes, all that I see, all that I hear, interest me in your welfare: I see that your spirit has raised you above misfortune, and that you have suited your sentiments to your present condition; your charms and your virtues render it respectable, but yet it is unworthy of you. I have it in my power, amiable stranger, to procure you a happier lot; my husband's intentions agree entirely with mine. I have at *Turin* a considerable estate: I want a friend of my own sex; and I shall think I bear away from this place an invaluable treasure,

sure, if you will accompany me. Separate from the proposal I make you, all notion of servitude; I do not think you were made for that condition. But though my prepossessions in your favour should deceive me, I had rather raise you above your birth, than leave you degraded beneath it. I repeat to you it is a friend of my own sex that I want to attach to me; for the rest be under no concern for the fate of these good people; there is nothing which I would not do to make them amends for your loss; at least they shall have wherewith to spend the remainder of their lives happily in ease, according to their condition; and it is from your hands they shall receive the benefits I intend them.

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The old folks, who were present at this discourse, kissing the hands of the Marchioness, and throwing themselves at her feet, begged the young *incognita* to accept of these generous offers. They represented to her with tears, that they were at the brink of the grave, that she had no other consolation than to make them happy in their old age, and that at their death, when left to herself, their habitation would become a frightful solitude. *Adelaide* embracing them, mingled her tears with theirs: she returned thanks to the Marquis and Marchioness for their goodness, with a sensibility that made her still more beautiful. I cannot, said she, accept of your courtesies: heaven has marked out my place, and its will is accomplished;

complished: but your goodness has made impressions on my soul, that will never be effaced. The respectable name of *Fonrose* shall ever be present to my imagination. I, have but one favour more to ask of you, said she blushing and looking down, that is, to be so good as to bury this adventure in eternal silence, and to leave the world for ever ignorant of the lot of an unknown wretch, who wants to live and die in oblivion.

The Marquis and Marchioness, moved with pity and grief, redoubled their intreaties; she was immovable; and the old people, the travellers, and the shepherdess, separated with tears in their eyes. During the journey, the Marquis and his lady were taken

taken up with nothing but this adventure; they thought they had been in a dream. Their imagination being thus employed, they arrived at *Turin*.

It may easily be imagined they did not long keep silence; and this was an inexhaustible subject for reflections and conjectures. The young *Fonrose* being present at these discourses, lost not one circumstance of them; he was at that age wherein the imagination is most lively, and the heart most susceptible of tenderness; but he was one of those characters, whose sensibility displays not itself outwardly; and who are so much the more violently agitated, when they are so at all. All that his parents said of the charms, virtues,
and

and misfortunes of the shepherdess of *Savoy*, kindles in his soul the most ardent desire to see her. He forms to himself an image of her, which is always present to him; he compares her to every thing that he sees, and every thing that he sees vanishes before her. But the more his impatience increases, the more care he takes to conceal it; *Turin* becomes odious to him; the valley which conceals from the world its brightest ornament, attracts his whole soul; it is there that happiness awaits him. But if his project is known, he sees from thence the greatest obstacles: they will never consent to the journey he meditates; it is the folly of a young man, the consequences of which they will be apprehensive of.

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The shepherdess herself, affrighted at his pursuits, will not fail to withdraw herself from them; he loses her, if he should be known.

After all these reflections, which employed his thoughts for three months, he takes a resolution to quit every thing for her; to go under the habit of a shepherd, to seek her in her solitude; and to die there; or draw her out of it. He disappears; they see him no more; his parents are uneasy at his absence; their fear increases every day; their expectations disappointed, throw the whole family into affliction. The fruitlessness of their inquiries compleat their despair. A duel, an assassination, every thing that is most unfortunate,

presents itself to their imaginations: and these unhappy parents ended their researches, by lamenting the death of their son, their only hope.

While his whole family are in mourning, *Fonrose* under the habit of a shepherd, presents himself to the inhabitants of the hamlet, adjoining to the valley, which they had but too well described to him. His ambition is gratified; they trust him with the care of their flocks. The first day after his arrival, he left them to wander at random, solely attentive to discover the places to which the shepherdess led her's. Let me manage, said he, the timidity of this solitary fair one: If she is unfortunate,

tunate, her heart has need of consolation; if it be nothing but a desire to banish herself from the world, and the pleasures of a tranquil and innocent life that retains her here, she will feel some dull moments, and wish for company to amuse or console her. If I succeed so far as to render that agreeable to her, she will soon find it necessary: then I shall take counsel from the situation of her soul. After all, we are here alone, as it were, and we shall be every thing to each other. From confidence to friendship the passage is not long, and from friendship to love the road is still easier at our age. And what was *Fonrose*'s age, when he reasoned thus? *Fonrose* was eighteen; but three months reflection on the same object

unfolds a number of ideas. While he was thus giving himself up to his imaginations, he hears at a distance that voice, the charms of which had been so often extolled to him. The emotion it excited in him, was as lively as if she had been unexpected. It is here, said the shepherdess in her plaintive strains, that my heart enjoys the only happiness that remains to it. My life has a luxury in it; I prefer its bitterness to the deceitful sweets of joy. These accents rent the sensible heart of *Fon-rose*. What, said he, can be the cause of the chagrin that consumes her? How pleasing it would be to console her! A hope still more pleasing presumed to flatter his desires: he feared to alarm the shepherdess,

herdless, if he resigned himself imprudently to his impatience of seeing her near, and for the first time he thought it sufficient to have heard her. *Fonrose* had a handsome form, to which were joined those talents which the young nobility of *Italy* do not neglect, and which rendered him truly amiable. He played finely on the hautboy.

Adelaide deeply buried in her own afflicting ideas, had not yet made her voice heard, and the echoes kept silence; all on a sudden this silence was interrupted by the plaintive sounds of *Fonrose*'s hautboy. These unknown sounds excited in the soul of *Adelaide*, a surprise mingled with anxiety. The keepers of the flocks

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that wandered on the hill, had never caused her to hear ought before but the sounds of rustic pipes. Immoveable and attentive, she seeks with her eyes who it was that could form such harmonious sounds; she perceives at a distance a young shepherd, seated in the cavity of a rock, at the foot of which he fed his flock. She draws near, to hear him the better. See, said she, what the mere instinct of nature can do! The ear teaches this shepherd all the refinements of the art! Can any one breathe purer sounds? What a delicacy in his inflections! What a variety in his gradations! Let them say after this, that taste is not a gift of nature.—Ever since *Adelaide* had dwelled in this solitude, this was the first time that

that her grief was suspended by an agreeable distraction, and had delivered up her soul to the sweet emotion of pleasure.

Fonrose, who saw *Adelaide* come and seat herself at the foot of a willow, to hear him, pretended not to perceive her. He seized, without seeming to affect it, the moment of her retreat; and managed his own flock in such a manner, as to meet her on the declivity of a hill, where the roads crossed. He cast only one look on her, and continued his rout, as if taken up with nothing but the care of his flock. But what beauties had that one look run over! How much more ravishing still would those charms be, which are so noble and

and touching in their languor, if love reanimated them ! He saw plainly that grief alone had withered in their spring the roses on her lovely cheeks ; but of so many charms, that which had moved him most, was the noble elegance of her person, and her gait. In the ease of her motions, he thought he saw a young cedar, whose straight and flexible trunk yields gently to the zephyrs. This image, which love had just engraven in flaming characters on his memory, took up all his thoughts. How feebly, said he, have they painted to me this beauty, unknown to the world, whose adoration she merits ! She who ought to see kings at her feet, employs herself in tending an humble flock ! Beneath what garments has she

she presented herself to my view? She adorns every thing; yet what a life for a frame so delicate! Coarse food, a savage climate, a bed of straw. Great Gods! and for whom are the roses made? Yes, I will draw her out of this state, so much too hard, and too unworthy of her. Sleep interrupted his reflections, but effaced not her image.

Adelaide, on her side, sensibly struck with the youth and beauty of *Fonrose*, ceased not to admire the caprices of fortune. Where is nature going, said she, to reassemble together so many talents and graces; but alas! those gifts, which to him are here but useless, would be perhaps his misfortune in a more elevated state.

state. What evils does not beauty create in the world? Unhappy as I am, is it for me to set any value on it? This melancholy reflection began to poison in her soul the pleasure she had tasted: She reproached herself for having been sensible of it, and resolved to deny it herself for the future.

The next day *Fonrose* thought he perceived that she avoided his approach. He fell into a profound melancholy. Could she suspect my disguise, said he, should I have betrayed it myself? This uneasiness possessed him all the day, and his hautboy was neglected. *Adelaide* was not so far but she could easily have heard the hautboy, and his silence astonished

astonished her. She began to sing herself; it seems, said the song, that every thing around me partakes of my heaviness: the birds send forth none but sorrowful notes; echo replies to me in complaints; the zephyrs mourn amidst these leaves; the sound of the brooks imitates my sighs.

Fonrose, softened by these strains, could not help replying to them.—Never was concert more moving than that of his hautboy with *Adelaide*'s voice. O heavens! said she, it is enchantment! I dare not believe my ears! Can the natural sense of harmony inspire such concord of sounds? While she was speaking thus, a rural or rather celestial melody, made the valley

valley resound. *Adelaide* thought she saw those prodigies realizing, which poetry attributes to her sprightly sister, music. Astonished, she knew not whether she ought to take herself away, or resign herself up to this enchantment; but she perceived the shepherd, whom she had just heard, reassembling his flock, in order to regain his hut. He knows not, said she, the delight he diffuses around him; his undisguised soul is not in the least vainer for it; he waits not even the praises I owe him. Such is the power of music! it is the only talent that places its happiness in itself; all the others require witnesses. This gift of heaven was granted to man in his innocence; it is the purest of all the pleasures; alas! it is the only

only one that I still relish; and I consider this shepherd as a new echo, who is come to answer to my grief.

The following days *Fonrose* affected to keep at a distance in his turn; *Adelaide* was afflicted at it. Chance, said she, seemed to procure me this feeble consolation; I gave myself up to it too easily, and to punish me, she hath deprived me of it.

At last, one day when they happened to meet on the declivity of a hill, shepherd, said she to him, are you leading your flocks far off? These first words of *Adelaide* caused an emotion in *Fonrose*, which almost deprived him of the use of his voice. I do not know, said he, hesitating, it is

not I who lead my flock, but my flock that leads me; these places are better known to it than to me; I leave to it the choice of the best pastures. Whence are you then, said the shepherdess to him. I was born beyond the *Alps*, replied *Fonrose*. Were you born among shepherds? continued she. As I am a shepherd, said he, looking down, I must have been born to be one. I doubt it, replied *Adelaide*, viewing him with attention; your talents, your language, your very air, all tell me, that fate had placed you in a better situation. You are very obliging, said *Fonrose*; but ought you of all persons, to believe that nature refuses every thing to shepherds? Were you born to be a queen? *Adelaide* blushed at this answer,

fwer, and changed the subject. The other day, said she, by the sound of a hautboy, you accompanied my songs with an art, that would be a prodigy in a simple shepherd. It is your voice that is so, replied *Fonrose*, in a simple shepherdess.—But has nobody instructed you?—I have like yourself no other guides than my heart and my ear. You sung; I was melted; what my heart feels, my hautboy expresses; I breathe my soul into it. This is the whole of my secret; nothing in the world is easier. That is incredible, said *Adelaide*. I said the very same in hearing you, replied *Fonrose*; but I was forced to believe it. What will you say? Nature and love take a delight sometimes in uniting all that they have

most precious, in the most humble fortune, to shew that there is no condition which they cannot ennoble.

During this discourse, they advanced towards the valley, and *Fonrose*, whom a ray of hope now animated, began to make the air resound with those sprightly notes, which pleasure inspires. Ah! prithee now, said *Adelaide*, spare my soul the troublesome image of a sentiment, which she cannot relish. This solitude is dedicated to grief; her echoes are not used to repeat the accents of prophane joy; here every thing groans in concert with me. I have also cause to complain, replied *Fonrose*. And these words, pronounced with a sigh, were followed by a long silence. You have cause

cause to complain! replied *Adelaide*; is it of mankind? is it of fortune? I know not, said he; but I am not happy; ask me no more. Hear, said *Adelaide*; heaven gives us to each other as a consolation in our troubles; mine are like an overwhelming load, which weighs down my heart. Whoever you may be, if you know misfortune, you ought to be compassionate, and I believe you worthy of my confidence; but promise me that it shall be mutual. Alas! said *Fonrose*, my misfortunes are such, that I shall be perhaps condemned never to reveal them.

This mystery but redoubled the curiosity of *Adelaide*. Repair to morrow, said she to him, to the foot of

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that hill, beneath that old tufted oak,
where you have heard me moan:
there I will tell you things that will
excite your pity.

Fonrose passed the night in the utmost emotion. His fate depended on what he was going to hear. A thousand alarming ideas agitated him in turn. He dreaded above all, the being driven to despair by the communication of an unsuccessful and faithful love. If she is in love, said he, I am undone.

He repairs to the appointed place; he sees *Adelaide* arrive. The day was overcast with clouds, and nature mourning, seemed to forebode the sadness of their conversation. As soon

soon as they were seated at the foot of the oak, *Adelaide* spoke thus :

“ You see these stones, which the grass begins to cover; they are the tomb of the most tender, and the most virtuous of men, whom my love and imprudence have cost his life.

“ I am a French woman, of a family of distinction, and to my misfortune, too rich. The Count *D'Orestan* conceived the tenderest passion for me; I was sensible to it, sensible to excess. My parents opposed the inclination of our hearts, and my frantic passion made me consent to a marriage, sacred to virtuous souls, but disallowed by the laws.

“ *Italy*

“ *Italy* was at that time the theatre of war. My husband went there to join the corps which he was to command. I followed him as far as *Briançon*; my foolish tenderness retained him there two days, in spite of himself. The young man, full of honour, prolonged his stay there with the greatest reluctance. He sacrificed his duty to me; but what have I not sacrificed to him? In a word, I required it of him; he could not withstand my tears.

“ He took leave with a presage at which I was myself alarmed: I accompanied him as far as this valley, where I received his adieu; and in order to wait to hear from him, I returned to *Briançon*.

“ A

“ A few days after, a report was spread of a battle. I doubted whether *D'Orestan* had got thither; I wished it for his honour; I dreaded it for my love; when I received from him a letter, which I thought very consoling. “ I shall be such a day, at such an hour, said he to me, in the valley, and under the oak where we parted. I shall repair there alone; I conjure you to go there, and expect me also alone; I live yet but for you.” How great was my mistake! I perceived in this billet nothing more than an impatience to see me again, and I congratulated myself on this impatience. I repaired to this very oak. *D'Orestan* arrives, and after the tenderest reception, you would have it so, my dear *Adelaide*, said he,

I have failed in my duty at the most important moment of my life. What I feared has come to pass. A battle has happened; my regiment charged; it performed prodigies of valour, and I was not there. I am dishonoured, lost without resource. I reproach not you with my misfortune; but I have now but one sacrifice more to make to you, and my heart is come to accomplish it.

“ At this discourse, pale, trembling, and scarce breathing, I took my husband into my arms; I felt my blood congeal in my veins, my knees bent under me, and I fell down senseless. He availed himself of my fainting to tear himself from my bosom, and in a little time I was recalled

led to life by the report of a shot which killed him.

“ I will not describe to you the situation I was in; it is inexpressible; and the tears which you now see flowing, the sighs that stifle my voice, are but a feeble image of it. After passing the whole night by the side of his bloody corpse, in a grief that stupified me, my first care was to bury along with him my shame: my hands dug out his grave.

“ I seek not to move you; but the moment in which the earth was to separate me from the sorrowful remains of my husband, was a thousand times more dreadful to me than that can be which is to separate my body from

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my foul. Spent with grief, and deprived of nourishment, my enfeebled hands took up two whole days in hollowing out his tomb, with inconceivable labour. When my strength forsook me, I repos'd myself on the livid and cold bosom of my husband. In short, I paid him the rites of sepulture, and my heart promised him to wait in these parts, till death reunites us.

“ In the mean time, cruel hunger began to devour my exhausted entrails. I thought it criminal to refuse nature the supports of a life more grievous than death. I changed my garments for the plain habit of a shepherdess, and I embraced that condition as my only refuge.

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From that time my only consolation has been to come here and weep over this grave, which shall be my own.

“ You see, continued she, with what sincerity I open my soul to you. With you I may henceforth weep at liberty; it is a consolation I had need of; but I expect the same confidence from you. Do not think that you have deceived me. I see clearly that the state of a shepherd is as foreign, and newer to you than to me. You are young, perhaps sensible; and, if I may believe my conjectures, our misfortunes have the same source, and you have loved as well as I. We shall only feel the more on that account for one another. I consider you as a friend, whom heaven, touch-

ed by my misfortunes, deigns to send me in my solitude. Do you also consider me as a friend, capable of giving you, if not salutary counsels, at least consolatory examples."

You pierce my very soul, said *Fonrose*, overcome with what he had just heard, and whatever sensibility you may attribute to me, you are very far from conceiving the impression that the recital of your misfortunes has made on me. Alas! why cannot I return it with that confidence which you testify towards me, and of which you are so worthy!—But I warned you of it; I foresaw it. Such is the nature of my sorrows, that an eternal silence must shut them up in the bottom of my heart. You are

very

very unhappy, added he, with a profound sigh, I am still more unhappy. This is all I can tell you. Be not offended at my silence; it is terrible to me to be condemned to it. The constant companion of all your steps, I will soften your labours, I will partake of all your griefs: I will see you weep over this grave, I will mingle my tears with your's. You shall not repent having deposited your woes in a heart, alas! but too sensible. I repent me of it from this moment, said she, with confusion; and both, with downcast eyes, retired in silence from each other.

Adelaide, in quitting *Fonrose*, thought she saw in his countenance the impression of a profound grief. I have

revived, said she, the sense of his sorrows, and what must be their horror, when he thinks himself still more wretched than I?

From that day, no more singing and no more conversation followed between *Fonrose* and *Adelaide*. They neither sought nor avoided each other: looks, in which consternation was painted, formed almost their only language. If he found her weeping over the grave of her husband, his heart was seized with pity, jealousy and grief, he contemplated her in silence, and answered her sighs with deep groans.

Two months had passed away in this painful situation, and *Adelaide* saw

saw the youth of *Fonrose* wither as a flower. The sorrow which consumed him, afflicted her so much the more deeply, as the cause of it was unknown to her. She had not the most distant suspicion that she was the object of it. However, as it is natural, when two sentiments divide a soul, for one to weaken the other, *Adelaide's* regret on account of the death of *D'Orestan*, became less lively every day, in proportion as she delivered up herself more entirely to the pity with which *Fonrose* inspired her.

She was very sensible that this pity had nothing in it but innocence; she had not even an idea of defending herself from it; and the object of

his generous sentiment, which was constantly present to her view, awakened it every moment.

The grief into which he had fallen, became such, that *Adelaide* thought she ought not to leave him any longer to himself. You perish, says she to him, and you add to my misfortunes, because I see you wasting with sorrow before my eyes, without being able to find a remedy for it. If the recital of the imprudencies of my youth do not inspire you with contempt for me; if the most pure and disinterested friendship is dear to you; finally, if you do not wish to render me more wretched than I was before I knew you, trust to me the cause of your unhappiness. You have

have only me in the world, to comfort you. Your secret, should it be more important than mine, fear not that I will divulge it.

The death of my husband has caused an abyss between the world and me, and the confidence which I require, shall soon be buried in that grave, to which grief is slowly conducting me.

I hope to precede you there, said *Fonrose*, melting into tears. Let me finish my deplorable life, without leaving you after me, the reproach of having abridged the course of it.

Oh heavens! cried she, what do I hear? Have I contributed to your misfortunes?

misfortunes? Finish! you pierce me to the heart! What have I said? What have I done? Alas! I tremble! Oh heaven! hast thou placed me in the world only to cause misfortunes? Speak, I tell you; it must no longer be concealed from me who you are; you have said too much to dissemble any longer. Very well, said he, I am *Fonrose*, the son of the travellers whom you have penetrated with admiration and respect. All that I heard of your virtues and your charms, inspired me with the fatal design of coming to see you under this disguise. I have left my parents in desolation, believing they have lost me, and weeping my death. I have seen you, I know your attachment to this place; I know that the only hope
which

which remains for me, is to die here in adoring you. Spare me useless counsels and unjust reproaches. My resolution is as firm and immovable as your's. If on betraying my secret, you disturb the last moments of a life that is extinguishing itself, you will to no purpose do me an injury, that I can never do you.

Adelaide, confounded, endeavoured to calm the despair into which *Fonrose* was plunged. Let me, said she, render to your parents, the service of restoring you to life, and save their only hope; heaven has offered me this opportunity of returning their favours. Thus, so far from making him furious by a misplaced rigour, all that pity has most tender in

in it, and friendship most consoling, was employed to soothe him.

Heavenly angel! cried *Fonrose*, I see all the reluctance you feel, to be the cause of wretchedness. Your heart belongs to him, who sleeps in the grave; I see that nothing can detach you from him; I see the ingenuity of your virtue to conceal your woe from me; I perceive it in all its extent, I am overwhelmed by it, but I pardon it in you. Your duty is never to love me; it is mine to adore you for ever.

Impatient to execute the design she had conceived, *Adelaide* arrived at the cottage. Father, said she to the old man, do you feel strength sufficient

cient to travel to *Turin*? I have need of some person in whom I can confide, to give the Marquis and Marchioness de *Fonrose* the most interesting intelligence. The old man replied, that his zeal to serve them, inspired him with courage. Go then, said *Adelaide*, you will find them mourning the death of their only son; tell them that he is living, in this place, and it is I who wish to restore him to them; but that it is indispensably necessary they should come here themselves to fetch him.

He departs, and arrives at *Turin*. He sends in his address as the old man of the valley of *Savoy*. Ah! cries Madame de *Fonrose*, some accident perhaps has happened to our shepherds.

shepherdes. Let him come in, added the Marquis; perhaps he will inform us, that she has consented to live with us. After the loss of my son, said the Marchioness, it is the only consolation I can taste in this life.

The old man is introduced: he prostrates himself, but they cause him to rise. You are lamenting the death of a son, said he to them; I come to tell you that he is living. It is our dear child who discovered him in the valley; she has sent me to inform you of it; but it is you alone, she says, who can bring him back.

As he spake thus, surprise and joy had taken from Madame de *Fonrose* the

the use of her sences. The Marquis, lost in astonishment, ran to his wife's assistance, to bring her to life, kissed the old man, and announced to all his house, that he had found his son. The Marchioness recovering herself, seized the hands of the old man, and squeezed them with tendernes. What shall we do, said she, to recollect a kindness that has restored us to life?

Every thing is ordered for their departure: they proceed on their journey, in company with the good old man, and they travel night and day, until they arrive at the valley, where their only good awaits them. The shepherdes is at the pasture, and the old woman conducts them there; they come near; but what

was their surprise, when they saw near her, their son, their beloved son, under the habit of a simple shepherd! Their hearts sooner than their eyes recollect him.

Ah, cruel child! cried his mother, throwing her arms around him, what vexation have you given us! why did you bereave us of our tenderness? and what do you come to do here? To adore that which you have admired yourself, said *Fonrose*, embracing the knees of his father, who raised him up in kindness. Pardon, Madam, said *Adelaide*, for having left you so long in grief; if I had known it sooner, you should have been sooner consoled. After the first emotions of nature, *Fonrose* was again fallen

fallen into the most profound affliction.

Come, said the Marquis, let us go to repose in the cottage, and forget all the vexations this young fool has given us. Yes, sir, I have been one, said *Fonrose* to his father, whom he led by the hand. It required not less than the straying of my reason, to suspend in my heart the movements of nature, to make me forget the most sacred duties, to detach me in fact, from all that I hold most dear in the world; but this folly you have caused to be born with me, and I am too much punished for it. I love without hope, her who is the most accomplished on earth: you see nothing, you know

nothing of this incomparable woman. It is her decency, her sensibility, and even her virtue, that I love almost to idolatry. I cannot be happy without her, and I know that she cannot be mine. She even renounced a considerable fortune, to bury herself in this desert.—And do you know what engages her to it?—Yes, my father, but it is a secret which she only can reveal to you.—She is married perhaps.—She is a widow; but her heart is not the more free for it; she has the strongest attachments to it. My girl, said the Marquis, on entering the cottage, you see how you have confused all who bear the name of *Fonrose*; the extravagant passion of this young man cannot be satisfied, but by the choice

choice of an object so excellent as you. All the wishes of my wife are, to have you for a companion and friend. Our son does not wish to live any longer, if he cannot obtain you for a wife. I desire no less than to have you for a daughter; see how much unhappiness you cause by a refusal. Ah, sir, cried she, your goodness confounds me; but listen and judge me. Then in the presence of the old man and his wife, *Adelaide* gave them a recital of her deplorable adventure.

She added to it the name of her family, which was not unknown to the Marquis de *Fourose*; and finished by taking them as witnesses with herself, of the inviolable fidelity which

she owed to her spouse. At these words, consternation spread itself over every countenance. Young *Fonrose*, choaking with sighs, ran into a corner of the cottage, to give them free course. The father, affected, ran to the assistance of his child. See, said he, my dear *Adelaide*, into what a state you have put him. Madame de *Fonrose*, who was near to *Adelaide*, pressed her in her arms, and bathed her with tears. Ah! why my girl, said she, will you cause us to mourn a second time, the death of our dear child? The old people, their eyes filled with tears, and fixed on *Adelaide*, observed how she took that conversation. Heaven is my witness, said *Adelaide*, rising up, that I will give my life in return for so much

much goodness. It would be placing me at the height of my misfortunes, to have to reproach myself with your's; but I wish *Fonrose* himself was my judge; let me, I beseech you, speak to him a moment. Then retiring with him alone, hearken, said she to him, *Fonrose*, you know what sacred ties retain me in this place. If I should cease to esteem and mourn a husband, whom I have loved but too much, I would be the most contemptible of women. Esteem, friendship, and gratitude are the sentiments which I owe you; but nothing of all that, holds the place of love. The more you have conceived for me, the more you have a right to expect. It is impossible to fulfil the duty which hinders
me

me from imposing on my husband. Nevertheless, I see you in a situation, which is affecting to a heart the least sensible; it is frightful to me to be the cause of it, and it will be more dreadful for me to hear your parents accuse me of their losing you. I am, therefore, very willing to forget myself in this moment, and to leave you as much as it is in my power, the judge of our destinies. It is for you to choose that of two situations, which appears to you the least painful; either to conquer yourself and forget me, or to possess a wife, whose heart, full of another object, can grant you but sentiments too weak to fulfil the desires of a lover. It is sufficient! cried *Fonrose*, and of a soul like your's, friendship ought to hold

hold the place of love. I shall doubtless be jealous of the tears that you bestow to the memory of another husband, but the cause of that jealousy renders you more respectable, and dearer to my eyes.

She is mine! said he, throwing himself into the arms of his parents; it is to her respect for you, and your kindness, that I owe her; and it is to you that I owe a second life. At this moment, their arms were as chains, from which *Adelaide* could not disengage herself.

She did not submit, but to pity and gratitude. I am willing to believe they admired her still more; *Adelaide* believed it herself. However,

ever, previous to their departure, she wished to review the grave, which she could not quit, but with reluctance. Oh! my dear *D'Orestan*, cried she, if from the bosom of death, thou couldest read the bottom of my heart, thy ghost would not murmur at the sacrifice I make; I owe it to this virtuous family, but my heart remains forever your's. I go to endeavour to cause happiness, without a hope of being happy. They could not tear her from this place, but by a species of violence, and she requested that a monument might there be raised to the memory of her spouse, and that the cottage of her old masters, who followed them to *Turin*, might be changed into a country house, both simple and solitary, where

she

she proposed to herself, to go sometimes to mourn the wanderings and misfortunes of her youth. Time, the assiduous care of *Fonrose*, and the fruits of her second marriage, have since opened her soul to new impressions of tenderness, and they there quote her for the example of an interesting and respectable woman, even to her infidelity.

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